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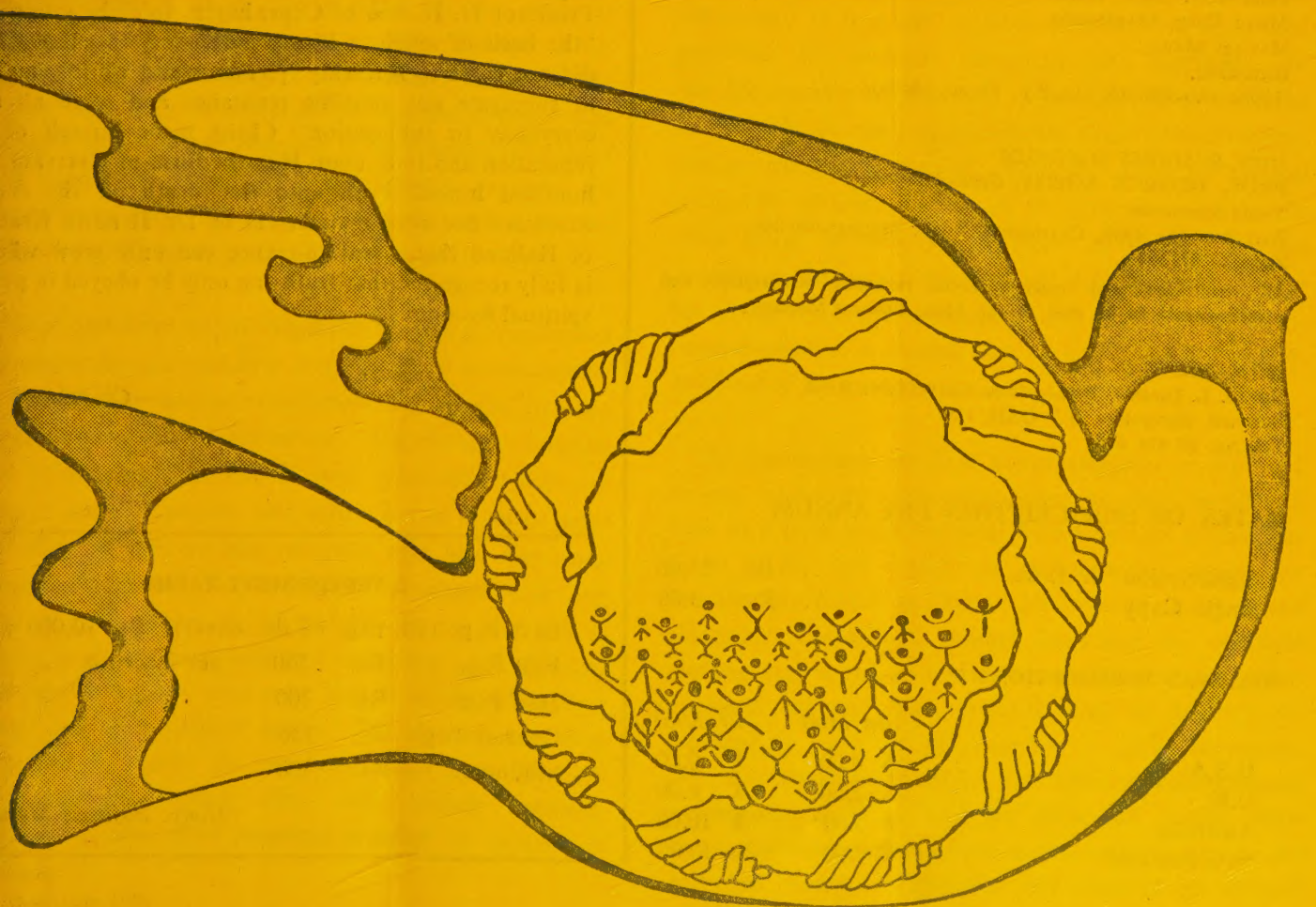
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The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● FEBRUARY 1991

COME HOLY SPIRIT RENEW THE WHOLE CREATION



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Opinions expressed by contributors do not commit the C.S.I.

The South India CHURCHMAN

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FEBRUARY 1991

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25 Years Ago!

W.C.C. DEBATES RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Speaking on the theological basis of religious liberty, Professor N. H. Soe of Copenhagen, told the group: 'the basis of religious liberty is the very fact that Christ did not come in heavenly splendour and worldly majesty to subjugate any possible resistance and force all of everybody to subjugation. Christ made himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and humbled himself even unto the death of the cross.' Professor Soe cited a statement by Dr. Hendrik Kraemer of Holland that, 'real tolerance can only grow when it is fully recognised that truth can only be obeyed in personal spiritual freedom.'

— Churchman 1966

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World Council of Churches The Unity We Seek



The Church of Jesus Christ, within God's purpose, is one. It is called to glorify God. The Holy Spirit at Pentecost manifested the dynamic unity in diversity of the Church. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit enable the one Church to live as sign and servant of the reign of God and the reconciliation which God provides for the whole of creation. Yet the churches are painfully divided. Their scandalous division endangers and damages the credibility of their witness to the world in worship and service. God therefore summons the churches to repentance. The Lord calls them to overcome all human barriers, to make the Church's oneness visible in the world today, and to live out fully God's gift of unity in Christ through the spirit.

We acknowledge with gratitude that through the ecumenical movement the churches have been led closer to one another in mutual understanding, theological convergence, common prayer, shared witness and service. The churches recognize that in their own life and in their relationships with one another unity is present and active, but in different ways and degrees. Yet we also recognize with pain that many Christians and churches, who have developed their own ways of co-operation and shared life, do not feel able to belong to a common ecumenical movement. Old divisions still persist and new ones arise both in doctrines and over moral and socio-political issues. The churches also have often failed to draw the consequences for their life from the agreements which they have already achieved. They have also often remained satisfied to co-exist in division.

The unity of the Church to which we are called joins us in pilgrimage together. The goal in history of his pilgrimage is a unity in apostolic faith confessed in common; it is the communion, koinonia, formed and sustained by the Word of God in a common sacramental life, entered by the one baptism and celebrated together in one eucharistic fellowship; it is a life together in which members and ministries are mutually recognized and reconciled. In this life together we follow as co-workers Christ's mission to the world, as witness is given to the gospel of God's grace, and service is offered to all. Thus the search for the full realization of unity consists in the efforts, guided by the Holy Spirit, to reach a point where all the churches can perceive in one another the one body of Christ and can enter into living eucharistic communion with one another, a communion which is a credible sign of God's love for human-kind and of the new creation.

This communion, rooted in the proclamation of the word in one eucharistic fellowship, must be fully manifested both on a local and a universal level by means of conciliar forms of life and action. In such conciliar communion churches are bound together at all levels in sustained and sustaining relationships, through confessing the one faith and engaging in worship and witness, deliberation and action. Personal, collegial and communal forms of ministry are intended to serve the life together in this communion. Conciliar communion allows for different organizational expressions of unity and for diversities arising from theological traditions and from various cultural, ethnic, and historical contexts. Difference and diversity are integral

to the nature of communion; yet there are limits to the difference and diversity. In communion differences and diversities are to be brought together and transformed in such a way that, as gifts of the Spirit, they contribute to the richness and fullness of the one Church of Christ.

The unity of the Church to which we are called demands mutual respect, sensitivity, caring and accountability. In taking specific steps together the churches express and encourage the enrichment and renewal of Christian life, as they learn from one another, suffer and rejoice in solidarity, pray with and for one another, work together for justice and peace, and care together for God's creation. Thus the churches will grow together towards that oneness which is given by God.

The unity of the Church as God's gift and calling is not for the good of the churches alone. It is for God's glory in the fulfilment of God's purpose in the world into which Jesus Christ came. Enabled by the Holy Spirit, this unity is a sign of reconciliation for the renewal of humankind, a means through which God gives healing for a broken and threatened world. Thus in the conciliar communion in which this unity finds expression, the churches look beyond themselves and await in expectation that perfect unity when God will be all in all.

(A statement from the Commission on Faith and Order of the W.C.C.)

CHRISTIANS IN IRAQ

Arab Christians, most belonging to one of four ancient churches, are a visible minority in Iraq—about 3.5 per cent of the 17 million population, according to the 1990 yearbook of the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

With few exceptions, Christians in Iraq today live as active citizens. Churches are full on Friday (the official holiday) or Sunday; and Christians have adequate access to jobs, social status and political office (foreign minister Tariq Aziz is a Christian). The Christian community has not been seen as a threat to the state; and relations with the Muslim community and the government, which has contributed to the building of churches, are good.

The majority of Iraqi Christians (about 300,000 members, 94 priests, 100 churches, 30 monasteries and orders and a 90 students Seminary in Baghdad) are CHALDEANS, the outgrowth of a 16th century split within the Assyrian Church of the East in North West Iraq. This larger group sought union with the Vatican, which has broadened and deepened its mission in monastic life, education and theological training. Its international relations are largely limited to its own diaspora and Rome: it has theological and ethnic similarities to Lebanon's Maronite Church, but almost no relations with it.

Second in size 80,000 members in Iraq four bishops, 34 priests, 38 churches and 10 church-related institutions is the Assyrian Church of the East, the other half of the 16th century split. Worship is in Arabic and Aramaic; Sunday schools and summer schools are active. The majority of Assyrians, however, have left Iraq during the 20th century. There are 50,000 in Chicago, where Dinka I, one of the church's two patriarchs, lives. About one-fourth of the Iraqi Assyrians follow the 'Old Calendar Church', whose patriarch Addai II lives in Baghdad. In recent years there have been moves for reconciliation between the two patriarchs; and earlier this year the two segments announced plans to reunite.

In separate letters to the WCC, both patriarchs expressed 'grave concern' over the gulf crisis and the resulting UN sanctions. Dinka spoke of his 'great sadness and grief' that the UN embargo would 'affect millions of children and the ill'. Addai called the embargo 'the blockade which is not approved by any religion', which 'endanger many lives, especially children'.

Emigration and conversion to Catholicism have greatly reduced the size of the SYRIAN ORTHODOX Church in Iraq. Presently, Iraqi Souryanis number about 30,000 with 16 priests, 20 churches and four church-related institutions. The Syrian Orthodox community has many professionals and people in high government posts and has been active in preparation and distribution of literature.

Most of Iraq's Armenian community (20,000 members, six priests and six churches) is in Baghdad. Part of the catholicosate of Etchmiadzin (Soviet Armenia), it has good contacts with the Catholicosate of Cilicia (Lebanon) as well. Among its social services is an old-age home reputed to be among the best in the country. Armenians have traditionally been economically active in Iraq.

There are a number of much smaller Christian churches in the country as well: Greek Orthodox, Evangelical (each has about 25 families), Adventists, Copts and expatriate Latin Catholics.

Estimates of the number of Christians in the Gulf States, including Kuwait, have ranged as high as a million—all of them expatriates.

GHASSAN RUBEIZ

Ghassan Rubeiz is secretary for the Middle East in the WCC Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service, 'Courtesies One World'.

Mary, Jesus' Mother*

MISS EILEEN THOMPSON**

As I travel round the Council for World Mission family of Churches, I am privileged to meet women from many different backgrounds, different walks of life and different countries. Women like Joy Munroe from the Guyana Congregational Union. She has set up a School of Hope to provide training, basic education and a chance in life for the forgotten girls of New Amsterdam, the girls who have dropped out of school and into degradation, unemployment, despair. Women like Hardy Wilkinson from the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar. Along with her husband Stephen she brings love and care into the lives of some 30 young teenagers sent to the remand home she runs. Many have committed very minor crimes because of hunger or poverty; some are more seriously in trouble on charges of violence; all are given support by Hardy and all are accompanied by her when they go to court.

These are but two examples of the sort of witness that is happening all over the world, in the Caribbean in Africa, in Singapore and here in India. In Christ women are working to help and strengthen other women and to take their rightful place as partners with men in the World as God willed it to be. In Genesis we read 'God created humankind, He created them male and female' and he commanded them both to work together. Later Paul writing to the Christian community says, 'There can be neither Jew nor Greek. There can be neither slave nor free, there can be neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. Nowhere is it saying that women should be the same as men but rather that they should take their place alongside men. The Bible has many examples of women who were transformed by God and acted in and through the power of God, just as there are examples of men who do the same thing.

Let us look briefly at one such woman, Mary, Jesus' mother. We have not got enough time to study her completely but we might glean a little about her. Too often we who are not Roman Catholics fight shy of Mary and that is a great pity. We lose the insights we can learn from this courageous, caring woman who is not afraid to act.

So we will consider then three incidents in the Gospels which show us three aspects of Mary—

the Christ bearer
the Christ sharer
the Christ hearer

First of all the most obvious is the Christ bearer. Mary the mother of Jesus who carried him in her body, who gave birth to him who nurtured him and who cared for him.

If we read Luke 1:26-37, we find Mary hearing the news that she is to have a child and a miraculous child at that. She is disturbed by the message—who wouldn't be? She is puzzled and probably confused. But she listens, she accepts and she prepares herself.

Let us concentrate on those two words—accept and prepare. Mary was prepared by the angel for the event that was to happen. She was told, She was made ready and then in her turn she acted. It was not a passive response. She accepted the news and accepted the child, accepted the responsibility and the possibility of rejection for carrying what might be considered as an illegitimate child.

In that preparation and acceptance we can see something of our experience as women. We are used to preparing to accept a child. For a large section of our lives our bodies make themselves ready. And those of us who marry and have children know what it is to carry a baby, to prepare for its birth and to accept that new life that is given into our charge. We have to accept too the struggles of another mouth to feed, another person to nurture. It is something that is part of us.

When it comes to Christ bearing, we go beyond those particular aspects. For each one of us, woman or man, married or single, is called on to imitate Mary and to bear Christ in ourselves and for others.

So what is that Christ bearing today? It is very much the preparation and acceptance we have seen in Mary. We need to be prepared to receive Christ, to hear from the messengers God sends to us. We are not likely to see the angel Gabriel but we do meet people who prepare us to receive Christ: our own mother, a presbyter at Church, a friend who comes when we are in need, and note too that we in our turn can be Christ bearers like that.

We have to let our hearts and minds be prepared to allow the news of Christ grow in there. We need to prepare ourselves by listening to God, by praying to him and hearing him speak in the silence or through other people. We need to accept this great gift and accept its growth and the effect it has on our lives. Mary's life was changed beyond all recognition when she heard the angel and accepted positively to be a Christ bearer. Remember that she was astonished. Remember that she asked 'why?' and 'how' but remember too that she acted and accepted.

* An Address to the Women's Fellowship Kiritapuram, Dornakal Diocese on 27th January 1991.

** Miss Eileen Thompson is the Communication's Director of the Council for World Mission, London.

And as she bore Christ and gave him to the world, so we men and women are challenged to share that inner knowledge which has grown in us.

That brings to the second aspect we are studying: Mary the Christ Sharer. Our passage for consideration here is John 2:1-12. It is another familiar story. Imagine yourself there for a moment.

It is a busy and happy marriage feast and then something goes wrong. Now Mary is there—perhaps she is a close friend of the family so she feels really sorry about what has happened. She wants to help and she knows that her son can be relied on. So she goes to him. She wants to share him with the people there so she seeks him out. She tells him the need and she leaves it to him to act as he will. But she tells other people to listen to him. She brings him into a situation.

That gives us an example. We can share Christ with others in that way. If we know his power and if we trust him to act, then like Mary we will be sharing him with the others who are suffering, struggling and in need. We might be called by a friend whose child is ill or someone whose house has been damaged by a flood. We feel it a loss. We cannot do anything ourselves. Yet we know that Jesus is present and we know his power. So we seek him and we go with that situation with his presence enfolding us and we let him take control.

In Papua New Guinea there is a young woman who has great difficulty in making relationships with people. She must have been hurt in her childhood. However she has great concern for the young dropouts in her town. She wanted to help them but she simply could not dare to speak to them. Now in her house she had lots of dolls and she used them to tell stories. The pastor came to her and challenged her to go out to the dropouts with her dolls. She could put in plays with them and so share God's love. At first she did not want to but later she agreed. Soon many young people would come to hear her stories. Sometimes she reenacted Bible stories, other times she told how the dropouts could get training at a certain centre and could find work. She developed quite a ministry. And she too developed and changed. As she shared God and his love with the young people so she found that she could be reached and could be loved in her turn. There are many ways of sharing Christ.

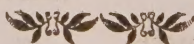
Finally let us look at the way in which Mary was a Christ hearer. How she listened to Jesus and how her obeying him ushered in a new concept of family.

If we look at John 19:25-27 we find the moving story of Jesus providing for his mother even as he hung on the Cross in great pain. He sees the two people he loves and he commits them to one another. And Mary and John listen to what he says. They take care of one another. They form a new family, not built on blood ties or kinship as it is normally understood but on the kinship which comes through being united in Christ and Children of the one heavenly father. They sweep away old barriers and establish something that is different.

If we become Christ hearers if we listen to what Jesus says to us, as we pray, as we go about our life, as we look at the world where we are, we too might well be challenged to act in new ways, adopt to new situations.

There was a parish in inner London which did this. It had a drifting population of young people who had moved from their family home to their first or second jobs after University. It had a static population of old people, often women on their own whose families had moved away, whose spouses had died, or who had simply never married. It would have been a lonely situation. Then the Church members felt that God was calling them to do something to change this. They divided themselves into small groups of about ten people. Each group was a mixed bag of young and old, men and women, rich and poor. And those groups became like families. In one case an old woman adopted a young man. She would mend his clothes and bake him cakes. In his turn he would do her shopping and repair her house. He became the son she had never had. They were just one case. Others linked together also so that even now ten years later when people who have moved away return they are bound together by ties of love.

Mary was a courageous woman in accepting God's call in preparing herself and in giving Jesus to the world, not simply as a baby but through her trust in his actions and through her acceptance of his love. Can we imitate her? She acted as a woman and her actions challenge women today. They also challenge men. For all are called to be witnesses to Jesus, to share him with the world.



Towards an Ecological World View

A resume of the proceedings of the seminar on 'Towards an Ecological World view held under the auspices of the NDAC/NCCI at Gurukul, Madras from 12th to 14th December 1990.

A sustaining ecological world view is a theme which engages the serious attention of thoughtful people in every field of human activities, especially in this closing decade of the present century. Along with peace and justice, integrity of the universe has been one of the major concerns of ecumenical bodies. The NDAC/NCCI has rightly taken at this seminar ecological issues and their demands in the mission of the church for serious consideration in the Indian context.

Four major papers were presented at the Seminar and they were supplemented by discussions, a case study, and section meetings on the sub themes.

Thanks to the active participation of the delegates about 60 in number, which include Bishop Ryder Deva-riyam, Bishop William Moses, Bishop Trinity Bhaskaran and Bishop Shettian. The Moderator also paid a visit to the conference. Certain issues of vital consequence in the present context came up for deliberation. On the basis of the ideas that emerged at the seminar the assembly made certain recommendation to the NCCI and the churches in India.

In his key-note address Dr. K. Rajaratnam highlighted the economic implications of environmental rights and responsibilities. Economic decision are taken within the framework of an accepted economic theory, and the theory that has come to stay is capitalism or free market theory. Supported by this theory, the mighty have exploited the resources of the earth and undermined the ecosystem. The need of the hour is the displacement of classical economic theory by a new theory of Environmental Economics. India should give top priority to the protection of environment, and develop its villages along the lines chalked out by Mahatma Gandhi. India should develop itself through village Republic that subsists in communion with nature.

In his paper on *Towards Eco Spirituality and Environmental Ethics in India*, Dr. A. Pushnaranjan sought to point out the direction in which Christian need to probe into the possibility of evolving a spirituality which would enable us to give an ecologically sound response to the situation at hand, and which, at the same time, will be authentically Christian.

Deploing the rapid and senseless desecration of God's creation and a depletion of the resources that nature gives us, Mrs. Aruna Gnanadason in her paper on *An Eco Feminist theology for India* declared that all these disasters have a particularly deleterious effect on women. Women know what it means when the delicate balance of nature is tilted precariously.

The experience of the Chipko movement shows that in dealing with the ecological crisis, society needs to heed the knowledge of women arising from their innate empathy and inter-action with nature. Patriarchy had reduced women's roles to subordination and the western mind

had debased both nature and women. Consequently development has been reduced to economic growth.

In this context, the eco-feminist theological vision offers a holistic vision of inter-dependence. It speaks of a whole new creative way of understanding life and resolving the conflicts that have been generated, the schisms, dualisms the humanity has emphasised.

In his presentation on *Creation stewardship : caring for God's earth*, Dr. Job S. Ebynezer, quoting from a statement of American scientist said, no conceivable enhancement of research methodology, no conceivable addition of public funds, no cries of warning will make any difference unless we are all changed in the spirit of our minds. He added : only the holy spirit can change the spirit of our minds. Caring for God's creation implies that we, whose minds are transformed by the Holy Spirit need to behold the creation and see its infinite preciousness irreplaceability, beauty and finally its unique relationship with its creator and humankind. He saw the present crisis as being due to our using God's gift carelessly, greedily and selfishly.

Concerning what the church could do in promoting environmental care and respect, three models were suggested :

1. Practice responsible stewardship towards creation.
2. Go beyond preservation and protection of nature to serving nature.
3. Be a prophetic voice for nature.

We need to stand before the principalities and powers, and declare boldly that degrading nature is a sin.

Dr. K. C. Abraham's presentation, *The Ministry and Mission of the local congregation in relation to ecological concerns* echoed and reinforced many points made by the earlier speakers. He saw questions about development and life style as basic to the problems. In creating awareness about the problem, he underlined the urgency of impressing on every body the connections between economic exploitation and the ecological crisis.

Dr. Abraham felt that the churches concern is best expressed in the liberation—solidarity model where the renewal of the whole creation is sought in solidarity with the weakest. The following suggestions emerged from the discussions :

1. Study materials, orders of worship appropriate to the churches ecological concerns need to be prepared in the regional languages.
2. A spirituality which strengthens our care for the earth needs to be evolved with sensitiveness to the spirituality of religions around us.
3. There is need for the churches to make responsible use of their own resources like land.
4. Abjuring opulence and waste in all aspects of life.
5. Commitment to a set of values which will ensure that all will have a sustainable life, free of fear and with a sense of satisfaction.
6. The population problem has to be tackled.
7. Gandhian teachings and the Indian traditions need to be explored for help in finding solutions.

CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

The Synod of the Church of South India had set apart one Sunday in a year to be observed as Children's Festival. For the year 1990, it was Sunday the 21st October. The Children's Festival was planned in such a manner that a few days prior to this Sunday various useful activities culminated into family get-together and prayer on Saturday the 20th October and a Special Worship service on Sunday the 21st October.

The objectives of the Children's Festival are to bring an awareness and involvement among the Christian communities and motivate them to :

- PRAY for the ministry to the children and their families.
- PRAISE God for the support that has been received from various child welfare organisations, specially for the help from Kindernothilfe e.V., through CSI-CCC.
- PARTICIPATE with renewed strength and recommitment in the Child Care programme seeking both financial as well as involvement of people to foster and to promote Child Care programmes especially to the disabled children.

The weeklong Children's Festival had both spiritual and pedagogical significance. Through this festival, the parents and all those who were concerned about the well being of children engaged themselves in a spiritual experience that made them aware of the gravity of the situation of children and the importance of the child care ministry.

It was planned that most of the christian families in South India would be encouraged to participate in the Children's Festival with the kind co-operation and support of Bishops and Presidents of the Church of South India and other partner churches ministering to the needs of the children through the Church of South India Council for Child Care.

The Children's Festival is a reflection of the Passover Festival. Deuteronomy 6 onwards emphasises the instruction by the parents to the children. The narrative indicated the faith transmission as response of parents to the questions raised by children about the tradition. The youngest child asks the question 'What does this mean?' Then the father narrates the story of God's action in liberating His people from the bondage in Egypt and this act of God was passed on from generation to generation through instruction of children....

God is continuing the act of liberation of children

from the bondages of poverty and disability through prayer and participation of people in the lives of children.

Children's Festival was a time where the families were given an opportunity to remember the various concerns of children and for those who are involved in caring for children.

The various programmes conducted during the weeklong Children's Festival were :

1. Bible Studies were conducted during the week. It was focused on the theological perspectives of Child Care. The Bible studies were led by the Presbyters-in-Charge, the correspondents and others.
2. Women's fellowship, Youth fellowship and the Sunday School teachers involved themselves in various activities which suited the local context by arranging 'house prayer fellowship meetings' and organising sales to raise funds for the support of children.
3. Competitions :
 - (a) Sponsored painting competition for children was conducted on different dates for the various age groups. The materials in this regard were supplied to them by the CSI-CCC. Prizes were awarded for the first three best paintings.
 - (b) Quiz Programmes on both general knowledge as well as biblical context were conducted.
 - (c) Competitions on various other activities such as sports, games and singing were organised.

4. Family Services :

The family service was held on Saturday the 20th October in the respective families during which the parents thanked God for the gift of children. A special liturgy for the family service was prepared by the liturgy committee of the Synod.

The liturgy contained a short introduction to family prayer. A brief time of sharing session where some families reflected upon the blessings they received and also identified the needs of their neighbours and children.

A reflection time was devoted to highlight how God prepared Moses for His purpose and also on the lives of Samuel and Jesus. The reflection was focused on Children as a Gift of God and that there is a purpose of every child.

(Contd. on p. 96)

Council for Healing Ministry

Small Project Fund—Phase II and Building Community capability in Health and Development in the Rural Context

I am glad to report that EZE has given the final approval for the continuance of projects at hand combining them under a new 'Head'. The change of name is both meaningful and symbolic in that it truly conforms to our faith and conviction regarding the new role of our hospitals in the context of community health care. This timely assistance ought to help us admirably in our future efforts to enable the local congregations in the implementation of VELCOM programme in their respective settings.

It may be recalled that the details of the proposal for Small Project Fund Phase-II was submitted to the Synod Executive which met at Mahabalipuram on 2nd October 1990 and received its approval. The recommendation of the Working Committee of the Council to effect a reduction of the total estimate by 20% to bring it within the sanctioned grant was duly approved. In accordance with the decision of the Synod Executive the tentative list of equipment/repairs and renovation of hospital buildings was recast in consultation with the respective medical officers/medical superintendents and the list was finalised. Subsequently a three-day meeting from 12th to 14th December was held in Madras with a representative of CASA to give it a final shape to enable CASA and WEM to expedite the supplies. The visit of Mr. C. R. Ullrich from WEM to the Council on 30th October '90 helped very much in finalising the procedures from the completion of Small Project Fund Phase-I as well as the plan of operation for Phase-II.

Dr. Manfred Wadehn, Deputy Director, EZE and Dr. Donner Carola Reichle of Asia Desk (EZE) were with us to review the on-going projects and the Councils activities in general. We are particularly grateful to our Moderator, General Secretary and Hon. Treasurer for guiding and helping us with their presence.

Special Events

— a two-day workshop was held in Madurai (19th and 20th October 1990) in which pastors, teachers and professionals to plan the implementation of the Healing Ministry component of the VELCOM project within the diocese (the training of village health guides).

— a seminar on 'Alcoholism and Drug Addiction' on 5th and 6th November at Kottayam (Madhya Kerala Diocese). About 40 representatives drawn from the laity and clergy attended the seminar.

Christian Aid—Assistance for Community Care Initiatives

Financial assistance from Christian Aid for supporting community health care initiatives have been made available to seventeen dioceses already; some more projects are in the anvil.

DIFAM

A timely grant received from DIFAM through the good offices of Rev. Robert Scheuermeier to help in patient care particularly to those who require long-term treatment (TB, leprosy, cancer etc.) was also distributed to fourteen of our hospitals. The grant was also meant for creating awareness about the problem of AIDS and to prepare our congregations to respond to the emerging challenge. A seminar on 'Problem of AIDS—Challenges and Perspectives' was held on 16th September with this assistance. Proceedings of this very significant seminar are being edited for publication meant for private circulation.

Plans for the Immediate Future

The following activities are being planned:

- a seminar for selected and interested teachers drawn from various dioceses to explore the possibilities of utilising school children as effective communicators in health. This is being planned in consultation with the Council for Education. We have received promise of assistance from communication experts from Tamil Nadu Government and other agencies.
- a seminar on the problem of developmental handicaps in early childhood in consultation with the Council for Child care.
- one-day workshop in Madras on 23rd January 1991 for diocesan co-ordinators for implementation of Healing Ministry component of the VELCOM programme within the dioceses.

DR. GEORGE JOSEPH,
Executive Director.

C.S.I. Women's Fellowship

Visit to the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in North East India—4th to 14th October 1990

The visit made a great impact on the team as well as on the members of both the churches. Sr. Rachel John, one of the delegates says:

'The women play an important part even though they are not recognised. The women's wing is very strong. They support the women workers, Missionaries, hospitals, Orphanages etc. Their offerings through faith gift, setting apart handful of rice whenever they prepare a meal, teaspoon full of sugar everyday are all very good practices worth introducing in our areas. They are simple, sincere and very affectionate. Their devotion is seen in every aspect of their life. Their church discipline is very good which helps to eradicate the evil from their society. Their great concern is to preach the Gospel, to proclaim the Goodnews and to give much time for devotion and Bible study'.

In those areas the absence of development projects are very visible. Due to the problems of transportation neither the state governments nor the private organisations have given much attention to the hill tribes. As a result the development of the tribals is far behind when compared with people living in the plains.

The members of the team as a memory of their visit, committed to raise Rs. 3,000.00 every year to start a Pre-School Centre in Manipur Synod which is the smallest and most backward in the Presbyterian Assembly.

At the end of the visit a Joint Meeting was held and it made some suggestions for follow-up programmes.

A detailed report was sent to C.W.M., C.S.I., Synod Officers and also to the leaders of the C.S.I.W.F. and the Presbyterian Church.

Joint Women's Conference of C.S.I., C.N.I. and Mar Thoma Church at Vishranthi Nilayam—8th to 11th November 1990

Ten members from each church were invited. Due to the cancellation of the trains at that time some members were forced to be absent. However, twenty-three members attended the meeting and the deliberations were of great value to each one who was present. There is a great zeal among the women to be united. A close and cordial fellowship was witnessed throughout the conference.

The C.S.I.W.F. office-bearers are grateful to our Moderator to spare his precious time to speak to the women leaders for the three churches in the communion service on 10th November 1990 morning.

The members after long discussion brought out some suggestions to promote unity at local level. They will be forwarded to the Joint Council.

Tour of South Kerala Diocese—21st to 27th November 1990

The tour was of immense value to me since I was able to visit the Pre-School centres in the diocese and meet the women workers, pastors and Evangelists' wives, and W.F. office-bearers of all levels. On different days a whole day conference was arranged which gave an opportunity to share, discuss and work out the implementation of our common goals.

On 27th November I had an opportunity of speaking to the office-bearers of the diocese, district chairmen and other leaders to discuss the implementation of the Ecumenical Decade proposals in the diocese. Rt. Rev. Dr. Amirtham Bishop in Trivandrum chaired the meeting. It is their desire to start a legal Aid Institute-cum-Women Development centre in Trivandrum. I thank Mrs. L. Amirtham for arranging the programme and wish the diocese all the best for their sincere efforts.

C.S.I.W.F. Literacy and Craft Centre-Exposure Programme from 14th to 20th December 1990

Thirty-five slum women were taken to visit Trichy, Madurai, Tirunelveli, Trivandrum and Kanyakumari.

The happiness of the women in enjoying the free air cannot be described in words. Their laughter and singing filled the space wherever they went. Enjoying the freedom they said to themselves, 'Let us laugh for these seven days'.

In Palayamkottai they witnessed a special programme given by local W.F. members. At the blind school in Palayamkottai they were moved to see the weaving done by the blind women. Later they visited the old people's home for the blind.

Although the slum women are poor but liberal in giving. As soon as they saw the old people they collected Rs. 68.00 on the spot and gave it to them. Due to diesel problem visit to Trivandrum had to be cancelled. We were extremely sorry to disappoint South Kerala W.F. members who waited for us.

The programme helped the slum women to interact with people belonging to different communities. The visit to the handicraft centres gave an opportunity 'to see and learn' the meaning of a perfect work.

The Meeting with Miss Claudia Koenig, South and Middle Asia Desk—EZE in the Synod Committee Room on 22nd December 1990 at 10.00 a.m.

The Meeting commenced with Prayer offered by The Most Rev. Dr. Victor Premasagar, Moderator, C.S.I. It was a very pleasant meeting. Miss Claudia Koenig was willing to listen and help the project holders. During

the meeting all her doubts concerning the Pre-School Education were cleared.

Miss Claudia Koenig was anxious to get the proposals for the co-operation between the Education Council and Innovative Pre-School Education run by C.S.I.W.F.

C.S.I.W.F. representatives suggested that the members of the C.S.I.W.F. Executive Committee and the Education Council could meet and work out the proposals.

Plan for the future programmes

- 26-28th Jan. 1991 — Second Line Leaders' Training Course for Karnataka Dioceses.
6 & 7th Feb. 1991 — Village Leaders' Training Karimnagar.
8-10th Feb. 1991 — Village Leaders' Training for Krishna-Godavari Diocese.

- 15-17th Feb. 1991 — Clergy wives' retreat for Nandyal.
1st March 1991 — Observance of World Day of Prayer.
9th March 1991 — Vishranthi Day Celebrations.
18-20th March 1991 — Pre-School Teachers' Training at Palayamkottai.

In this year a Conference for young women will be held to equip and to identify the leaders among them.

A Joint Consultation for women and men will be held to bring out the goals of the Ecumenical Decade.

MISS SUGUNA DEVASUNDARAM,
General Secretary,
C.S.I.W.F.

(Contd. from p. 62)

Intercessory prayers were made for children who do not have families, for children of broken families, rag pickers, child labourers, disabled children and the Child Care organisations.

There was a time for offertory where the family offertory was taken and placed in the envelope that was provided and given as offering in the Sunday Worship Service.

5. Sunday Worship Service :

The Sunday Worship Service was held on the 21st of October 1990. An order of service was prepared by the Synod Liturgy Committee. Children carried flowers and participated in the procession outside the Church and placed the flowers on the altar before the service began. There was a call to Worship, litany of Praise and adoration, Special prayer of confession and assurance of forgiveness.

Lessons suggested for the day were :

Deuteronomy 6 : 1-9
Psalm 127 which was read responsively
Epistle Lesson : Ephesians 6 : 1-4 and
Gospel Lesson : Matthew 25 : 31-46

This was followed by a short sermon. A few members shared their experience of family life and child rearing.

Several children including the disabled children were involved in this service.

The offertory was collected by few children. A special litany of thanksgiving was said as the children placed the offering at the altar. The worship concluded with dedication service, prayer and benediction.

Acknowledgement

The Dioceses, Churches, Organizations and individuals meaningfully participated in all the programmes connected with this festival. The Council gratefully acknowledges their involvement and support through their prayers and mobilising resources for the support of disabled children. The Council is deeply grateful to the Bible Society of India which undertook the responsibility of printing several thousands of prayer leaflets, liturgies and other information.

The Children's Festival was a time of great blessing to thousands of families and children.

'Truly whatsoever you have done to any of my brothers, even to the least of them, you have done it to me' Matt. 25 : 40.

C. BEDFORD, *Director*
C.S.I.-C.C.C.

Council for Technical and Vocational Training

Executive Director's Report for the period September to December 1990 to the Synod Working Committee Meeting on 15th and 16th January 1991

The highlights of our activities for the period under review are :

1. Human Settlements Development

Final approval of this long pending project with a marginal revision in the cost plan has been received. A note on the proposed operational strategies and modified cost plan is enclosed. The dioceses in which the programme is to be initiated first are being invited for a briefing so that the programme could be started in March/April with the necessary infrastructure and understanding.

2. South-South Exchange

The three missionaries (technical) who have been sent to Kiribati Islands in the Central Pacific to assist in upgrading training cum production centres have started contributing much to this process. However, one of them Lazarus, took critically ill and had to undergo an emergency operation.

3. Assistance for New Equipment

All the items except for a few which are in the pipeline (and those cancelled by WEM due to non-materialisation of orders) have been supplied to the institutions. This programme will be completed in the next 3 months.

4. Projects Approved

Four of our projects recommended earlier, i.e. the Integrated Rural Development and Community Health Project, Karnataka Northern Diocese ; Integrated Tribal Development Programme, Vellore Diocese ; Vellarada Rural Education and Planning Programme, Phase II, South Kerala Diocese ; and Paruthipally Range Area Development Extension Programme, South Kerala Diocese have been approved and another two are in the process of being approved. An additional grant for the Family Development Project, Medak Diocese has also been sanctioned.

5. Training Programmes

Training programmes are conducted-coordinated periodically based on the needs of our various programmes.

For example :

The Superintendent of Pasumalai Trade School was enabled to undergo a training in 'New construction

Techniques and Materials in Housing' organised by the Anna University, Madras ; Miss Ambika, Bethel Ashram, Tiruvalla underwent a 3 months training in Needle Work and Embroidery at EVE's Embroidery and Tailoring Centre, Tiruvalla ; and an Orientation in development was provided to the project workers of the Rural Awareness Project (Karinmagar Diocese) and the Integrated Tribal Development Programme (Vellore Diocese).

6. Staff Training

Our programme staff are enabled to participate in various training programmes/seminars and workshops to sharpen their skills and update their knowledge base.

For example :

Deenadayalan participated in the II and III phases of the Training of the Trainers Programme in Berhampur and Bangalore respectively, co-ordinated by the Training Task Group of Dr. Badal Sen Gupta.

John Jayaraj attended the State Convention in Social Forestry in Madurai and the Technical Conference on Literacy organised by the State Resource Centre for Non-Formal Education and the Tamil Nadu Board of Continuing Education.

Marjorie Rathna was a participant in the Training of Trainers Programme jointly organised by CAPART and the Association of Rural Poor in Sathyavedu, as also the seminar on 'Voluntary Organisation's Role, Approach and Participation in Government, Policies and Programmes' organised by the Directorate of Field Publicity, Government of India in Vellore.

Manohar participated in the Consultation of 'NGO in the Nineties' at Sholingur.

The Assistant Director, Dr. Richard participated in the consultation in Madras with Dr. David Korten 'to conceptualise the theory of sustained development and search for an alternative form of development in the Indian context'. Further he presented a paper and demonstrated popular theatre at the National Appraisal Workshop in Madras, as also participated in the Seminar organised by the National Development Advisory Council of the NCC on Ecology and Development.

The Director himself participated in a National Consultation on 'Strategic Roles : Challenges and Perspectives for the 90's in Bangalore.

7. Community Polytechnic, Yellareddy

The process for starting satellite centres in the other Andhra dioceses has been initiated. We also intend to start community polytechnics in each of the other regions as pathfinders.

8. Joint Evaluation

The first phase of the Joint Evaluation by our Council and CSI CCC covering 20 institutions is in the process of being finalised. In fact 5 complete reports have already been submitted and others are being completed.

9. New Initiatives

(a) Cyclone Relief/Rehabilitation — Krishna-Godavari Diocese

Renovation/Re-construction of Village Schools cum Churches, Parsonages and other Public buildings affected by the cyclone of May 1990 has begun in 4 parish areas and the Noble College, Machilipatnam. Priority is given to Church cum Schools in villages near the coastal area of the Diocese which was the worst hit. CTVT is closely monitoring the programme, the actual implementation being done by a Civil Engineer of the Diocese and the Treasurer of the Diocese, assisted by local community.

(b) Non-formal Technical Training in Yellandu, Dornakal Diocese

Some funds have been made available for starting non-formal training in masonry and carpentry at Yellandu in Dornakal Diocese. The staff and trainees have also been identified. The Diocese has made available a building and site for this purpose.

(c) Programmes by Diocesan Women's Fellowship

There has been good response to our offer of assistance and guidance for initiating/strengthening women's training programmes by the Diocesan Women's Fellowships. We are in fact now so flooded with applications for

Scholarships, that only a small part can be considered, despite the increase in our total scholarships from 150 to 300.

10. Future Focus

(i) A Workshop to discuss the implementation specifics of the Human Settlements Development Programme is planned for February 1991.

(ii) SKIP, an all India association for Technical Schools in which the Director is a founder member, is to be assisted in conducting a Seminar on 'The Vision and Strategies to meet new challenges in the 90's' in February 1991. The Seminar will provide an opportunity for our own institutions many of whom are also members of SKIP, to sharpen their focus in the service of trainees from the marginalised sections of society.

(iii) A consultation between Overseas Partners, Synod and Dioceses to be held to discuss the developmental issues relating to our church so as to strengthen the future work of the CSI CTVT and the socio-economic boards of the dioceses.

(iv) Regional VELCOM 'Melas' with the cooperation from the other Councils and Departments of the Synod is also be planned shortly.

Conclusion

We express our gratitude to our good Lord for His continued guidance, the Officers of the Synod for their cooperation, the Overseas Resource Channelling Agencies for their understanding and support, and our staff for their tireless efforts in actualising the objectives to which this Council is committed.

JAMES E. BALRAJ,
Executive Director.

The Henry Martin Institute of Islamic Studies

NEW DIRECTOR

The Rev. T. I. Chinniah was duly elected as the fifth Director of H. M. I. by the Institute's Board of Management. He succeeds the Rev. Dr. Sam V. Bhajjan who was the Director since 1971.

Rev. Chinniah was ordained in 1952 after completing his theological studies in North India. Over the years he has served the Medak Diocese of the Church of South India in various capacities and on a number of committees and commissions. Set apart to look after Muslim work in the Diocese, Rev. Chinniah joined H.M.I. in 1971. Since then he has been an active participant on the teaching staff and in other affairs at the Institute. In addition to his duties at HMI, he is also the presbyter of an Urdu speaking congregation of St. Luke's Hindu-tani Church.

Rev. Chinniah has travelled to many parts of the world as a staff member of HMI and has contributed in a number of ways to conferences and organizations abroad. He spent his first sabbatical leave at Birmingham University where he completed his one year certificate course in Quranic Arabic and Islamic Studies. His second sabbatical was spent at the Overseas Ministries Study Centre in New Jersey, U.S.A. where he attended a one year course in Missiology. In October 1989 he presented a paper at the International Conference of Muslim Majority and Minority Relations held in New York and sponsored by the Jeddah Muslim Institute. Recently he completed his Ph.D. dissertation in Islamic Studies at Osmania University and is presently awaiting the results of that work.

At home Rev. Chinniah is supported by his wife Poolabai, who is a trained nurse, and their four children : Esther, Christopher, Artaban and Nirmala.

Department of Ecumenical Relations

I am glad to submit this brief report which covers mainly my visits to the UK and Europe.

An invitation to attend the EMS Consultation and EMS Synod in Germany was received and our Moderator permitted me to attend this as the Director of the CSI Department of Ecumenical Relations, representing the CSI.

Rev. Gordon Shaw, Mrs. Helen Lidgett of London, Rev. Robert Scheuermeier of Stuttgart and Dr. H. S. Wilson of Geneva prepared my tour programme.

I was in the UK from 21st October to 5th November 1990. I visited leaders and Ecumenical officers of the Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland, CWM, Christian Aid, United Reformed Church, CMS, Anglican Consultative Council, USPG, MCOB and others in London. I also met the Ecumenical Officer of the Church of Scotland of Edinburgh. I spent two days with Rt. Rev. K. E. Gill at New Castle.

On 5th November 1990 I took part in a meeting with the members of CSI related Missions Committee and the Conference for World Mission Overseas Visitors Group in London. It was agreed to request the CSI Synod to allow the Skelmersdale Ecumenical Centre to have partnership link with Medak and Cambridgeshire Ecumenical Council to have such a link with Vellore Diocese. It was also agreed to request the CSI Synod to use the Koenonia Fellowship Exchange Visit money to send first groups from Medak and Vellore to Skelmersdale and Cambridge for partnership links.

The Church of Scotland has expressed its willingness to take two dioceses of the CSI for partnership programme.

From 5 to 25 of November I was in Germany.

In St. George's I was with Rev. Noeske, who is mailing correspondence for establishing partnership of Villingen District with Karnataka Southern Diocese.

In Pforzheim, I was with Rev. Schomers who is making correspondence for establishing of Pforzheim with Coimbatore Diocese.

At Stuttgart I took part in the Partnership Seminar in which the CSI Documents—Bilateral partnership—Notes

for discussion and Exchange Visit Programme in South to Northern and South to South were translated into German language and were discussed along with other papers.

I also visited and met leaders of Church District Churches which are in partnership relationships with some of our dioceses. I also met Rev. Victor Joshua of Karnataka Central Diocese at ULM and Rev. Konesaga of Karnataka Northern Diocese at Beiseforth.

I participated in the EMS Consultation and EMS Synod at Slohenwart.

During that time, I met Rev. Walter Arnold, Secretary for Mission and Ecumenical Affairs of the Evangelical Church of Wurtemberg. He is willing to help in establishing partnership links of districts of Wurtemberg with two of our dioceses.

I also met representatives of Churches in Korea, Indonesia, Japan, South Africa and others and discussed with them about our South to South Exchange Programme. They have shown their interest.

I spent a night and a half day at Basel, attending Bas Mission Synod and looking into the Library and Archives.

Then I spent two days in Geneva and met the leaders of different Departments of the WCC and other organisations. Departments of Dialogue, Faith and Order, Communication, Justice, Peace and integration of Creation, Mission and Evangelism International Affairs, CICARWS, Lay and Study centres, met the General Secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and Dr. H. S. Wilson. Also met Dr. Rajasekhar of the Lutheran World Federation.

During my visit I have collected books and literature on Church Union, Faith and negotiations.

I take this opportunity to thank our Moderator and other Officers of the Synod for making my visit to the above mentioned countries possible. I also thank the EMS for meeting major part of the Overseas travel expense and to all those who helped me while I was travelling in those countries.

REV. J. M. JOGULA,
Director.

Dashing Round the Dioceses

For CWM's Director for Communication Eileen Thompson, the week of 26th January to 2nd February was one of new insights and experiences as she travelled around Dornakal diocese. As guest of Bishop D. N. Samuel, she had been invited to learn about the struggles and challenges facing women in India and to see how CSI's Women's Fellowship is seeking to meet this at diocesan level.

The itinerary took her from Dornakal itself with its Holy Trinity Cathedral to village churches meeting in the open air to small and large town churches. At each of the eleven places there was the opportunity to share in worship and to have a fellowship meal later to meet congregation members and local leaders to talk.

There was also occasion to next visit particular projects sponsored by the Women's Fellowship. Notable among these were three pre-primary schools in the Kothagudam area. Here on the outskirts of town is a colony with handicapped and beggars, a young woman and a school for 12 small children. They meet in the yard of her father's house sitting on a platform he has built in the shelter of the eaves. From about 8.30 until 4 each day the children are looked after and taught songs, stories, and how to write. Many of the children are undernourished and weak. Others are bright as buttons and are revelling in their chance of education. As part of the VELCOM programme venture like this will receive some financial help from the central WF.

Dornakal Cathedral Women's Fellowship is also active beyond the walls of the Cathedral compound. These women are each committed to contributing Rs. 10 each month towards the salary of young missionary and his wife working in a nearby village attending a service at Kothagudam enabled Eileen Thompson to see the way in which this ministry was being built.

Commenting on her week's visit, Eileen Thompson expressed gratitude to the Bishop in Dornakal and Mrs. Mary Samuel, Rev. B. Simon and Mr. Joshua Jayakumar who were principally responsible for looking after her during her stay. She had been moved by the dedication of local pastors and congregation members as they live and work and witness in their communities and amazed at the energy and stamina of the people whose day in God's

Service began at 4 a.m. and often did not finish until midnight or early next morning.

Talking to the women has also given her a more realistic view of their lot and she hopes to be able to communicate this through CWM's news Service NEWSHARE.

Her visit also included a stay in Medak diocese where again she was introduced to the work being done amongst women. She spent time with Mrs. Daisy Premasagar and Mrs. Dorothy Ebenezer learning about projects to educate the younger women and also a scheme to provide shelters and care for the old, both men and women. A visit to Medak itself enabled her to see education in action and to learn about plans for a food for work development.

Her trip to South India concluded with a short period in Madras where she had meeting with the Moderator, the Most Rev. Dr. Victor Premasagar, Prof. George Koshy, the General Secretary and Mr. K. J. Victor David the Synod officers and various Directors of the Councils. There was an opportunity to learn in depth about the healing ministry and to share the fruits of research done on their behalf at CWM's office in London. This letter is just one of the ways in which the CWM partnership lives out its vocation of sharing.

But Eileen Thompson's main responsibility is communication and part of her visit was to hold discussion with Rev. Dass Babu CSI's Communication Director. Together they looked at the possible development of a network of trained communicators spreading through the churches at all levels from local to diocesan to regional. They also saw the need for further growth in the documentation of stories and experiences arising from the work of the different Councils and the various dioceses and for the translation of those into print, traditional and electronic media.

As people travel from church to church within the CWM in this way, so the concept of sharing and partnership is increased.

—DASS BABU
Director



NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

MADRAS DIOCESAN COUNCIL

The 23rd Session of the Madras Diocesan Council was held from 13th to 16th January, 1991 at St. Columba's Higher Secondary School, Chingleput—a School celebrating presently its 150th Anniversary.

It was a fitting location, with history behind it, and Chingleput town is also traditionally known as the base of all activities of the Church of Scotland Mission prior to the establishment of the Church of South India.

The Council venue was the playing field of the School, with a beautifully decorated 'pandal' variously described as a 'Palace Durbar Hall', 'Arangam', 'Maligai' etc.

Eight huge 'Roman pillars' formed part of the back drop to the rostrum.

Between the central pillars was hung a large and beautiful batik painting, commissioned by the Bishop in Madras, with words in Tamil, 'Come Holy Spirit, Renew the Whole Creation'—the Theme of the Session. The painting depicted the Holy Spirit coming down in the form of a dove to bless and renew all creation.

The two addresses to the Session by the Most Rev. Dr. Victor Premasagar, Moderator, Church of South India, left a lasting mark on all present.

His faith in the theme and his dedication to the conviction that humankind by itself cannot survive unless God renews the whole creation, from ants to beasts, trees to mountains, caught the attention of the delegates. His simplicity of approach to such a serious topic enabled all delegates, whether from urban or rural areas, to grasp every word and sense.

The first day of the Session was marked by the opening Devotions and Presidential address by the Rt. Rev. M. Azariah, Bishop in Madras.

Bishop Azariah raised the question, 'as to how far we, as the Madras Diocesan Christian family, carried on our ministry and mission exercising our own role as salt, light and yeast of the human society we are connected with'.

He brought forth 5 different concepts or principles with a single thread of purpose and goal of the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ.

- (i) Conversion (Mark 1 : 14)
- (ii) Change (John 2 : 1-11)
- (iii) Transformation (Romans 12 : 1 & 2)
- (iv) Renewal (John 3 : 3 & Rev. 21 : 5)
- (v) Recreation (II Corin. 5 : 17)

Speaking on 'Change' he quoted William Barclay who said, 'Nothing moves more slowly than the Church', and Bishop Azariah added, 'How I wish this is not true'. He continued, 'We have no choice but to accept change as a basic principle of our life and work, pointedly, in our work of Christian ministry. How shall we learn to become sensitive to the need for change and work for change for the better, of persons, of places and of times, connected with our daily life?'

Speaking at length on 'Renewal', Bishop Azariah based his approach mainly on the Book of Ezekiel—The Prophet speaks of God's promise to give to the human a new heart and a new spirit on a future Day of the Lord.

The second day commenced with Holy Eucharist Service at St. Andrew's Church conducted by Rev. S. D. Soundarajan. Rev. Noel Jason led the Bible Study on 'Come Holy Spirit' based on the Book of Ezekiel, Chapter 3.

The third day's Devotion was conducted by Rev. D. Rajashekar, with Rev. V. Devasahayam covering the subject, 'Renew the Whole Creation'—Book of Ezekiel.

Rev. Samuel Madhavaraj conducted the last day's Devotion, with Rt. Rev. Azariah speaking on 'Come Holy Spirit, Renew the Whole Creation'.

All three Bible Studies were based mainly on the Book of Ezekiel.

A song composed by Rev. Rajadas relating to the theme of the Council, was rendered by the 'Clergy Choir'.

On the evening of 15th January, St. Andrew's Church, Chingleput, hosted a Public Reception/Public Meeting largely attended, followed by a two hour programme of entertainment.

Prof. George Koshy the General Secretary of the Synod and Rev. Dass Babu, the director of the communications Dept. were Present.

The Public Meeting was addressed by Mr. K. K. Panickerselvam, Member of Parliament; Mr. K. Thamizhmani, M.L.A.; Mr. Aswath, Chairman, Chingleput Municipality; Mr. K. Veeraraghavan and Mr. P. J. Krishnan, leading lawyers of Chingleput.

The key-note address was delivered by Dr. K. Rajaratnam, Economist and General Secretary of the Lutheran Church in South India.

Items for the entertainment were provided by selected Schools of the Diocese from Madras, Tambaram, Kanchipuram, Arakonam and many Diocesan Institutions, Chingleput. It is to the credit of the performers that not a single person left the pandal for dinner until the programme ended at 9.30 p.m.

There were 310 delegates and 50 invitees at the Council Sessions. In the elections for Office-Bearers, Rev. Wesley Brown was re-elected Diocesan Secretary and Mr. D. Nelson, the new Treasurer and Rev. Rajaram is the Vice-President.

To the Rt. Rev. M. Azariah, a lot is owed for the success of this Session. His personal and intimate relations with most delegates, his sense of humour at the rare tense occasions, his dedication to the cause of the underprivileged, and his genuine affection for people, are all factors which made this Council Session a memorable experience.

P. STEPHEN RAJARATNAM, Chingleput

FEBRUARY 1991

Diocesan Youth Conference

The 74th Diocesan Annual Youth conference was held at Punnakkadu C.S.I. Church from 26 to 29 December 1990. Nearly 350 delegates from different pastorates attended the conference.

The conference officially began with flag hoisting by Mr. Varghese Eapen, Vice President, Diocesan youth movement. Rt. Rev. M. C. Mani, Rt. Rev. K. J. Samuel, Office-bearers of the Diocesan youth movement, and Diocesan officials were the distinguished guests on the occasion.

At the inaugural meeting Bishop M. C. Mani, President of the youth movement presided over the meeting. In his presidential address Bishop emphasized the need of the personal renewal by the Holy Spirit. Rt. Rev. K. J. Samuel, East Kerala Diocesan Bishop, inaugurated the meeting. Bishop Samuel in his inaugural address outlined his vision for the church. Mr. Johnson George presented a 'Thamra Patak' on behalf of the youth movement to Bishop Samuel as a token of love. The Rev. Thomas Samuel, Diocesan Treasurer and Rev. K. John Mathai delivered special messages. The Rev. M. P. Joseph Youth movement General Secretary gave the welcome address.

Rev. Dr. D. Philip, Principal Marthoma Jubilee Institute Tiruvalla, Rev. Dr. K. K. Cherian and Rev. T. V. Thomas, former Bible Society Auxiliary secretary, gave inspiring talks. The main theme was 'Come Holy Spirit Renew the Whole Creation'. The delegates were divided into different groups for discussion.

Dr. James Vadakancheri, Criminologist, Police Training College, Trivandrum, gave an enlightening talk. The Missionary session and dedication service were well received. Dr. D. Zechariah delivered message at the dedication service.

The conference came to an end with business session and sharing of experience of all the delegates who took part in it.

The hospitality and the services of Rev. T. C. Varughese, Vicar, Church Committee and youth movement, members of the Punnakkadu Church were appreciated by all and they were thanked for all what they have done to make the conference a grand success.

We thank God for all His wonderful guidance and mighty deeds.

REV. FELIX MATHEWS,
Chittar.

CSI SYNOD YOUTH BOARD

Regional Youth Conference—Tamil Nadu
December 27-30, 1990

The Synod Youth Boards' second Regional Youth conference for Tamil Nadu was held from December 27-30 1990 at St. Paul's Higher Secondary School, Vepery, Madras. 85 participants (55 men and 30 women) drawn from seven dioceses from Tamil Nadu attended. The first youth conference for the Karnataka region sponsored by CASA, Madras was held in September 1990 at Bangalore.

The second Regional Conference was inaugurated by the Rt. Rev. M. Azariah, Bishop in Madras on the 27th December evening at 4.30 p.m. Following the inauguration, on behalf of Dr. D. D. Isaac, Executive Director, Indienhilfe, his staff, explained the aims, scope and function of Indienhilfe and their related activities.

'Committed to Christ—Commissioned by Christ' was the main theme of this three-day residential conference. The Rev. Dr. Dhyanchand Carr, Vice Principal, Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary Madurai was the main speaker who dealt with the theme in four sessions. There was active involvement from all the participants in discussing and deliberating on the theme having direct application of it to the present contemporary situation.

The programme covered group dynamics, intercessory prayers, kavi arangam, lecture, drama and cultural programme etc. Guest lecturers on Christ and politics, Christ and culture, Christ and mission, youth and new society and youth and Christian witness were dealt with by Dr. Felix Sugirtharaj, Prof. Theophilus Appavu, Prof. George Koshy. The General Secretary of the Synod Rev. Arun Gopal and Rev. J. Premiah respectively. There were reflections and discussions on the theme where the youth actively participated.

The outcome of three-day residential youth meet was encouraging. Many young people have committed themselves to enter into the Lord's ministry. This meet was a time of fellowship and rich blessing to all who had attended.

REV. S. CHRISTOPHER,
Convenor.

Summer Course on Islam 1991

The Henry Martyn Institute announces its annual summer course on Islam to be held from 30th April to 14th May at Montauban Guest Home in Ootacamund, Nilgiris (T.N.). The course aims to build communal harmony and is open to people of all faiths.

Interested persons should write :

Dr. Andreas D'Souza,
H.M.I. Summer Course,
Henry Martyn Institute,
Box 153, Hyderabad-500 001,
ANDHRA PRADESH.

Sermon Outlines for March 1991

3-3-1991 Fourth Sunday Before Easter

FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER

Bible Passages :

Genesis 50, 15-21

Psalms 15

I Samuel 24

Colossians 3, 12-17

Matthew 18, 21-35

Mark 11, 19-26

The words, cover, pardon and forgiveness, which are used in Old Testament for *forgiveness* are metaphors for the removal of sin. (i) It is covered, so that it no longer obtrudes itself between man and God; (ii) it is pardoned, so that it ceases to form a barrier; (iii) it is forgiven, so that there is no resentment or anger in the mind of the injured party. In the Old Testament forgiveness is conditional upon *Repentance*, a word which involves a change of mind and intention.

In the first lesson we see that David had a fair 'chance' to destroy Saul but he spared his life, an instance of God's grace in him. Saul maliciously sought David's life; David generously saved Saul's life. He considered Saul not as his enemy but God's anointed and was under a particular protection of the divine law—a true sign of obedience, compassion and kindness which even Saul acknowledged. The merits of forgiveness are immanent (i) David call Saul father (v. 11); Saul calls David Son (v. 16). A great relationship was established. (ii) They parted in peace.

Saul, for the present, desisted from persecution.

New Testament teaches that there is no limit to forgiveness. The rule is, not once, nor seven times but seventy times seven (Matt. 18, 20 ff). The condition attached to forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6, 12 Lk. 11, 4) is that unless we ourselves forgive then we have no hope of forgiveness from God. In fact, it is not conditional but change of our attitude and action. This is vividly portrayed in the Gospel lesson. (Matt. 18, 21-35) where the servant who would not forgive his fellow servant a trifling debt, is delivered to the tormentors till he shall have paid the enormous debt he was owing to his master. It is clear that he who does not forgive cannot repent.

In his Epistle to Colossians St. Paul exhorts us to have mutual love and compassion. Be tolerant with one another and forgive one another (Col. 3, 13). We must admonish one another in Psalms and hymns. Christian music and singing is not just for entertainment, it has God's message, it is capable of great edification but we make no melody unless we sing with grace in our hearts.

10-3-1991 Third Sunday Before Easter

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS

Bible Passages

Exodus 24, 12-18

Psalms 27

Exodus 34, 29-35

2 Peter 1, 16-19

Luke 9, 28-36

2 Corinthians 3, 4-18

The Transfiguration of Jesus is the discovery of his glory. Prediction of Christ's Kingdom is near approaching and a specimen of that Kingdom is in the Transfiguration. Jesus gives the disciples this glimpses of his glory to show that his sufferings, specially the death on the Cross, were voluntary. The fourth Gospel, i.e. St. John, omits this,

for the writer has no need for a particular example of Jesus' glory; to him the whole life of Jesus is one visible continuous demonstration of God's glory.

New Testament lesson tells us that Jesus was transfigured on a mountain by a heavenly radiance and a heavenly voice attests his mission. Moses and Elijah, who together sum up the significant features of the Old Testament, were present and were subordinated to him (Mk. 9, 7). As at his Baptism his sonship was proclaimed by voice from heaven, so that voice is heard at the decisive halfway stage of his ministry.

In the Old Testament lesson we see Moses having a wonderful experience in the cloud. The Public ceremony of sealing the covenant being over, Moses is called up to receive further instructions. He came down enriched with the best treasure for he brought in his hands the two tables of the law. It was the effect of his sight of God—his face was shining. We should let our light shine before men, that all we converse may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus (Acts 4, 13).

St. Paul speaks about the excellency of the Gospel above the law. The Old Testament dispensation was the ministration of death (v.7) whereas that of the New Testament is the ministration of life. This reveals the grace and mercy of God through Jesus Christ. The condition of those who believe the Gospel is much more happy. (i) They have light—for with open face we behold the glory of the Lord (v. 18) (ii) they have liberty (v. 17) (iii) the light and liberty are transforming us.

The incident is full of symbolism. Cloud is the symbol of the divine glory and presence. Peter desired to build three tabernacles to project this dwelling of God, confirming to a particular place. This is unnecessary and premature thought. God is already dwelling with men and yet before Christ's glory can be permanently realized there must be the way of suffering and crucifixion. No crown without cross.

17-3-1991 Second Sunday Before Easter—Passion Sunday

THE CROSS

Bible Passages

Job 19, 21-27

Psalms 130

Isaiah 44, 1-8

Hebrews 9, 11-15

Mark 10, 35-45

Matthew 11, 20-30

Jesus gave his life to the world by the Cross. Death on Cross was a capital punishment practised by Phoenicians and Persians which was adopted by Romans.

In the New Testament two elements are particularly emphasised. (i) The suffering (Heb. 2, 9; 1 Pet. 4, 13) and the (ii) Shame (Heb. 12, 4; 13, 13). The ignominy and pain of the Cross only served to intensify the realization of the depth of Christ's love for people (Eph. 3, 18-19) and the profound meaning of his death as a voluntary submission to the demands of the moral law on behalf of sinners (Phil. 2, 8). Thus the Cross become a designation of the Saving work of Christ in reconciling God and People (Col. 1, 20; 2 Cor. 5, 19) and people who hitherto had been kept at enmity by racial antagonism (Eph. 2, 16-18).

In the Old Testament lesson Prophet Isaiah speaking of God as our Redeemer and Rock. Here two great truths are seen: (i) People of God are happy people especially on account of the covenant (ii) the God we trust in is a God of incontestable sovereignty and irresistible power. Jesus made a new covenant; Jesus exhibited a

great power even to overcome death on Cross. Jesus is our Redeemer, the Saviour and Rock.

In the Epistle, the author speaks about the importance of the sacrifice of Christ made on the Cross. It is the redeeming death. The efficacy of the blood of the Old Testament sacrifices extended to the purifying of the flesh from ceremonial uncleanness. But the blood of Jesus has far greater efficacy (v. 14) (i) it was Christ's offering himself to God without spot, without any sinful stain (ii) it is sufficient to purge the conscience from dead works, it reaches to the very soul and conscience (iii) it is sufficient to enable us to serve the living God by sacrificing and renewing the soul through the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit.

In the Gospel portion we see Jesus counselling his disciples, specially James and John to think of suffering with him (Mk. 10, 35-45), not looking for positions and powers. We often make boundless demands upon our Master. Our care must be to know how to suffer with him not to rule : (i) Dominion is generally abused in the world (v. 42) (ii) He that would be truly great and chief, he must lay out himself to do good to all. Jesus is our model (i) Jesus takes upon him the form of a servant (ii) He came not to be ministered but to minister (iii) He became obedient to death for he gives his life a ransom for many.

24-3-1991 Next Before Easter

PALM SUNDAY

Bible Passages

Zechariah 9, 9-12
Psalms 118, 19-26

Genesis 22, 1-14

Philippians 2, 5-11
Mark 15 or
John 12, 12-19
Mark 11, 1-11

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was a Triumphal entry. He made it a public entry to show that (i) he was not afraid of the power and malice of his opponents in Jerusalem. He did not steal into the city incognito ; (ii) to show that he was not cast down or disquieted at the thoughts of his suffering.

1. *The Outside* of this triumph was very mean ; he rode upon ass's colt. This colt was borrowed too. Christ went upon the water in a borrowed boat ; ate the passover in a borrowed chamber ; was buried in a borrowed sepulchre. This shows his *emptiness*. We learn : not to mind high things but to condescend to them of low estate.

2. *The inside* of this triumph was very great. (i) He is a blessed Saviour—so often promised, so long expected (ii) His kingdom—People believed that he had a Kingdom and that it was the Kingdom of their father David. God given Kingdom. Hosanna to the Kingdom (v. 10).

In the Old Testament lesson we notice the prophecy of the Messiah and his Kingdom with express application to Christ's riding in triumph into Jerusalem (Matt. 21.6). (i) He is a righteous ruler, he is just, (ii) He is a powerful Protector to all those who bear faith and true allegiance to him, for he has salvation. (iii) He is a meek, humble, tender father to all his subjects (iv). He is lowly ; he is poor and afflicted having emptied himself.

Gospel lessons portray the same thing. He visited in great humility. His Kingdom is not of this world. It

shall not be set up carnal weapons of warfare. It is the Kingdom of heaven. He will establish it by proclaiming Peace on earth, goodwill towards people.

In the Epistle St. Paul exhorts to be like-minded and lowly-minded from the example of Christ (Phil. 2, 5-11). (i) His humiliation—He was not only God's servant but he came to minister to all. The lowest step of his humiliation was his dying the death of the Cross. (ii) His exaltation—God highly exalted him, because he humbled himself. He exalted his whole person, the human nature as well as the divine. It has the honour and power.

31-3-1991 Easter Day

EASTER DAY

Bible Passages

Exodus 15, 1-11
Psalms 118, 14-17
Isaiah 12
Exodus 14, 15-31

Colossians 3, 1-4
John 20, 1-18
Luke 24, 13-35
John 21, 1-14

Bible Lessons

Every book in the New Testament declares that Christ rose from the dead. The event took place on the third day (Jewish way of reckoning). The New Testament writers regard the Resurrection of Christ as the fulfilment of the scriptural prophecy. (See 1 Cor. 15, 4.) Like his passion and death, the Resurrection was a part of the divine plan for our salvation. This has to be proclaimed than to explain. It is a mystery beyond human comprehension. It was God's act (Act 2, 24 & 32 ; Rom. 6, 4 ; 1 Pet. 1, 21) in the same sense that the Old Testament writers had taught that the redemption of Israel from Egypt or Babylon as God's act. It is the sign vouchsafed by God of the ultimate victory over sin, death and the devil (Rom. 6, 9). In this age the victory is discerned by faith.

Old Testament lessons hails the victor of the Lord over the evil forces. I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously (Ex. 15, 1). The song of Moses and the other Israelites was a celebration as they were set free from the clutches of slavery. It describes how the chasing armies of Pharaoh were drowned—the defeat of the death. They acknowledge that they found their Saviour. The Lord...has become my salvation (v. 2). Now they are free. They have the Saviour.

New Testament is the fulfilment of the Old Testament. In the Gospel portions it is written that Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead on the third day (Luke 24, 46). The proclamation made by the Apostles gave impetus to the news that Jesus rose from the dead. They boldly affirmed this fact. Resurrection was the main theme of their preaching. (i) Resurrection is the new creation, (ii) Christ is the first fruit of them that are asleep, (iii) the power of the resurrection was the very source of the life of the early Church, (iv) The Church Universal is built upon this fact, a living witness to the resurrection. (Eph. 1, 19 ; Col. 2, 12).

St. Paul admonishes us to seek the things which are above (Col. 3, 1). (i) set our affection on heavenly things—Godly qualities (ii) set aside things on the earth—things that lead us to death. Resurrection is the message of Christian faith. It is the Christian hope. It is not of despair ; not of futility but of promise ; not of hiddenness but of revelation. It releases a new energy, offers a new courage to proclaim this good news to the world.

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